

Safer Internet Day Report - Have your Say: Young people's perspectives about their online rights and responsibilities

Aims

This is the UK's largest ever survey of young people's attitudes toward online rights and responsibilities, collecting survey responses from over 24,000 young people age 7-19. The results have been further discussed in targeted focus groups with 90 young people from across the UK. The aim was to find out the most important online rights for young people across the UK and to explore these rights further and understand them in the context of young people's experiences online. The quantitative and qualitative research explored the following themes: services young people use to connect and communicate with others, creativity online, what stops young people enjoying their time online, cyberbullying, supporting friends, privacy, reporting, searching for information and critical thinking skills, esafety education, and who young people turn to if something upsets or worries them online.

Key Findings

- Overwhelmingly we heard from young people that they believe they have a right to be safe online, and this was selected as the most important right by primary and secondary age children. It was selected by over half (57%) of primary school age children (7-11s) in their top 3 rights, and by nearly two-thirds (63%) of secondary school age children (11-19s) in their top 5 rights.
- There are a range of people who children turn to for support, but both primary and secondary age children are most likely to turn to their parents if something upsets or worries them online (79% of 7-11s would tell a parent; 78% of 11-12s; 58% of 13-15s; 42% of 16-19s).
- Across all ages, young people recognise they have a responsibility to help their friends stay safe online. In addition, a third (32%) of 7-11s would tell a friend if something upset or worried them online, rising to over half (53%) of 11-19s.
- Primary age children are highly engaged with digital technology: 86% of 7-11s use some form of online communication tool, such as social networks and virtual worlds (56%), chat functions in online gaming (38%) or chatting over a webcam (28%). There is a rapid increase in use of technology from 7 to 11 years, with just 5% of 11 year olds not engaging in any form of online communication (compared to 22% of 7 year olds). Young people are also digital creators, with 31% of 7-11s having created a game online and 12% having created an app.
- Secondary age children are prolific online communicators: 96% of young people age 11-19 use some form of online communication tool, including services such as social networks (74%), emails (72%), instant messaging (68%), webcams (52%), chat functions in online gaming (45%), chat rooms (17%) and blogs (14%). Young people are also contributing to the production of online content: a quarter (24%) of 11-19s have created a website, 21% have created a game, 14% have created an app and 12% have created a blog.
- Many young people having fun online, but there are some things that stop them enjoying their time online. For both primary and secondary age children, adverts and people being unkind were the two things that stopped them enjoying their time on the internet the most.
- People being unkind: Almost a third (31%) of primary school age children (7-11s) and a quarter (23%) of secondary school age children (11-19s) said that mean comments or behaviour stops them from enjoying their time online.
- Adverts: A quarter (24%) of primary school age children (7-11s) and over a third (37%) of secondary school age children (11-19s) said that adverts stop them enjoying their time online. Young people suggested a variety of reasons for disliking adverts (and pop ups in particular), including finding them annoying,

inappropriate and scary. Some children commented that adverts can promote products falsely, while others noted that they are often worried that they might get a virus by clicking on these adverts.

- Seeing unpleasant or hurtful things: 22% of primary school age children (7-11s) and 21% of secondary school age children (11-19s) said that seeing things that upset or embarrass them stops them from enjoying their time on the internet. However there is a higher percentage who have seen something unpleasant or hurtful on the internet in the last year; 27% of 7-11s and 41% of 11-19s. It is clear from the survey comments and focus group analysis that there are many different types of content that young people find unpleasant online, including scary videos, pictures and chainmail; 'rude' things and swearing; violent films or games.
- Primary and secondary age children believe they have a right to report concerns. The majority of young people are aware that reporting tools are available to them (80% of primary school age children and 84% of secondary age children). Among social network users, 36% of primary school children (7-11s) and 24% of secondary age children (11-19s) said they have reported something online. However, a number of young people are not making the most of this tool because they lack the skills, knowledge or confidence in the reporting process. 1 in 5 (20%) 7-11 year old social network users, and 1 in 6 (16%) 11-19 year old social network users faced such barriers in reporting.
- Privacy settings are welcomed, but knowledge could be improved: There is was a high awareness and take up of privacy tools. 58% of primary school age children (7-11s) and 74% of secondary age children (11-19s) using social networks said they changed their privacy settings from the default settings. However, many young people could benefit from improved knowledge in this area: almost half (42%) of primary age social network users and almost 1 in 10 (9%) secondary age social network users were not sure if they had changed the settings, or didn't know how to.
- The right to be educated about staying safe online was voted in the top 10 rights on both the primary and secondary surveys, and it is encouraging to see that 80% of 7-19s said they have been taught about staying safe online in the last year. There is an opportunity for educators to reach out to early primary and upper secondary age groups, where lower levels of provision were reported.

Policy Context

Promoting a safer and better internet for children and young people involves promoting their online rights – to be safe online, to report concerns and to manage their privacy, and more – while also developing children's understanding of their own responsibilities to support their friends and be kind online.

Methodology

The study was based on two UK-wide surveys; a primary school survey involving 11,757 children age 7-11 and a secondary school survey involving 12,340 children age 11-19. The surveys were disseminated via schools and available to complete online and offline between 24th September and 31st October 2012. In order to explore the survey's findings the themes were discussed in targeted focus groups with 90 young people from across the UK.

Background

The research was carried out by Childnet International for the UK Safer Internet Centre, which is part-funded by the EC's Safer Internet Programme.

Source www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2013/survey

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